

FRESNO, CA - Today, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) sent a letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff expressing concerns over the implementation of new regulations addressing Social Security "no match" letters. Costa sent the letter along with Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Congressman Dennis Cardoza (D-Atwater), and Congressman George Radanovich (R-Mariposa).

"The new regulations will not solve immigration issues in this country. They will only wreak havoc on American business," said Costa. "These no-match letters are a Catch-22 for employers. They face heavy fines and criminal indictments if they do not terminate workers, and are subject to legal action if they do. This is a no-win scenario for American business and the American consumer."

When an employer hires new employees, legal identifying documents are obtained, including Social Security cards, and sent to the government. The Social Security Administration then verifies the submitted Social Security numbers and if they do not match with the employee, a letter is sent to employers informing them of the inconsistency.

New regulations on immigration established by the Department of Homeland Security create additional penalties for employers without making needed changes to current law to protect the rights of legal workers and employers, and prevent undue burden on the employer. Because the agriculture industry in California employs a largely immigrant-based workforce, these new guidelines will create disruptions in the workplace that will have catastrophic economic consequences.

"Agriculture is a labor-intensive business, and if the Department of Homeland Security wishes to take away the agricultural workforce, who do they suggest should harvest the remainder of this season's crops? Maybe Secretary Chertoff and his colleagues would like to roll up their sleeves and join us in the fields," said Costa.